

March 5, 2015

Testimony is support of SB 858 and I would like it to eliminate the tipped credit so servers like me are paid the full minimum wage.

To Representative Tercyak, Senator Gomes, and members of the committee:

My name is Cynthia Cloney. I live in Oakville, Connecticut and am a server at a small, woman-owned restaurant in the greater Waterbury area. I have worked there for 18 months. I ended up with my current employer after I left another serving job in Waterbury.

I felt better working in a restaurant run by a woman. Because the clientele is a bit better, I was earning slightly more than my first job but still not that much. I find it is very hard to get ahead as a server which is why I am now seeking employment in the counseling field.

One day my boyfriend examined my paycheck and told me that the restaurant was taking out two percent of all tips I earned that were paid on a credit or debit card to cover the restaurant's credit card fees.

At the end of the night I have to give a percentage of my tips to a pool that then gets distributed to all workers, even ones who earn more per hour than I do. Taxes are hard enough but servers have their paychecks chipped away at by everyone. We get left with the bones but our muscles do all the hard labor, our hearts feel the abuse of customers and the sting of getting cheated out of tips, a very common occurrence.

Over time, the amount of tip money I earned dwindled because of these fees and the tip pool. If these fees had not been taken out, I would have been buying a house this year rather than still living with my family.

Eliminating the tip credit wage, however, and prohibiting someone other than ourselves from chipping away at our checks would help me get ahead. Not passing the law undermines women, a majority of serving employees, and Connecticut's economy in general.

Thank you.

Cynthia Cloney
Oakville